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ON PAGE 7

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Currents in the News

Moscow Olympics: Not All Games

MOSCOW

With the Olympic Games opening here on July 19, Moscow appears to be mobilizing as much for political conflict as for athletic competition.

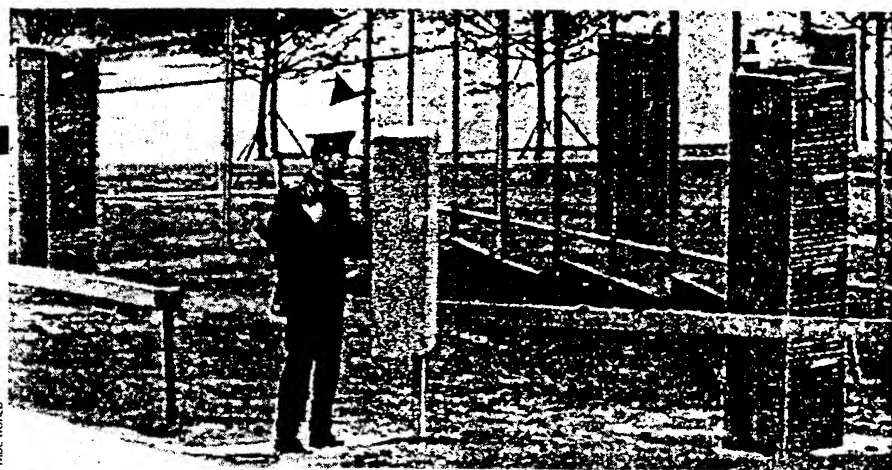
Thousands of men in uniform are on watch almost everywhere. Highway junctions are guarded by groups of soldiers. In each block on main streets, sentries scan passing cars and pedestrians. Military trucks rumble by, ferrying soldiers to and from lookout duty at Olympic installations.

The Olympic Village is surrounded by wire and looks more heavily guarded than the Kremlin or Lubyanka Prison. Riflemen are posted every 100 yards. Electronic "seeing eyes" watch each gate, while plainclothes police with radios keep tabs on visitors inside.

Hotels and other buildings that foreigners are likely to visit are heavily guarded, too. Most are equipped with U.S.-made electronic scanners to detect concealed weapons. Entry to larger hotels requires an Olympic pass.

Since July 10, all highway routes into Moscow have been manned by militia, sealing off the city from the rest of the country. It is barred even to Soviet citizens, unless they can prove that they live or work in Moscow.

This vast police operation has these goals: To prevent terrorism such as that at Munich in 1972, guard against



Electronic sensing devices surround Soviet soldier at Olympic Village.

"subversive" literature or activities and hinder unauthorized meetings between Soviets and foreigners.

Barring nonresidents from Moscow has another aim: To prevent an embarrassing rush of outsiders from buying the food and goods being put in stores during the Olympics to impress foreigners.

To justify the tight security, Soviet officials tell the people that foreigners are plotting to use the Olympics as an opportunity to undermine socialism and damage Russia's international prestige.

Radio broadcasts say the foreigners want to spread "subversive booklets paid for from the funds of the U.S. Secret Service." A television program showed "foreigners" being caught with anti-Soviet pamphlets strapped to their waists. Rumors are being spread that "Zionists and the CIA" are planning ideological "contamination."

The precautions mean foreigners will get few chances for contacts with the Russian people. Known dissidents have been removed from Moscow. Many chil-

dren have been sent to the country. Adults will be more careful than usual in talking with visitors.

Soviet officials pretend not to be worried about the American-led boycott that is keeping 64 nations out of the Olympics as a protest against Russia's invasion of Afghanistan. Officials claim that the 79 competing nations will have a record number of 1,500 entrants in track and field.

Soviet television is expected to blot out scenes that would reveal that some nations are not allowing their flags to be flown or their anthems played. Nor will many Russians learn that most Western embassies have barred their staffs from attending the games.

But the Kremlin cannot hide the absence of such Olympic leaders as the U.S., West Germany and Japan.

Because of the boycott, NBC has canceled plans to televise 152½ hours of the Olympics. All that viewers will see on the U.S. networks will be a few minutes of highlights a day as part of regular sports and news programs. □